

MEMORANDUM

SEATTLE-KING COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



TO: Norm Rice

FROM: Jill Marsden *JM* DATE: April 29, 1983

SUBJECT: AIDS

In response to your inquiry about AIDS I have gathered the information presented below. I have organized it according to the questions that you might have to respond to.

1) What is the AIDS problem in the Seattle-King County area?

Since June 1982 there have been 10 reported AIDS cases that meet the Center for Communicable Disease Control's (CDC) definition of AIDS. There have been 4 deaths among those ten cases. In addition there have been 5-6 AIDS cases that do not meet the CDC definition e.g. cases in which the person had prior chemotherapy and subsequently developed AIDS and there was therefore a question as to whether the chemotherapy lead to the immune system depression.

However in reading these statistics you should be aware that since we have no effective surveillance system yet the above figures may just be the "tip of the iceberg". Read on

2) What is the SKCDPH doing about AIDS?

- (a) Surveillance Project - Dr. Hunter Handsfield, STD Control Officer has been working with volunteers from the Seattle Gay Clinic to design a surveillance project. The surveillance project will be staffed with volunteers and is intended to set up a formal system to collecting complete information on cases from "sentinel" physicians (i.e. area M.D.s who are most likely to be in contact with patients at risk for AIDS) and area hospitals. There will also be some surveys of blood banks, addiction agencies and other agencies likely to have some contact with AIDS cases. The surveillance system should go into effect in May 1983, however, we will need additional funding to operate it on other than a volunteer basis.
- (b) Lymphadenopathy study - A grant from the National Institute of Health to study abnormally swollen lymph nodes has been oriented to address questions related to AIDS. Lymphadenopathy is thought to be a potential precursor to AIDS. The study began in June 1982 and required a control group of 70 patients. The patients were located within the first month of the study. Again another indicator that there may be a much bigger problem than we know about.
- (c) Case management - There has been at least one case of AIDS where the individual had no private physician and no insurance and was a patient at the Health Department's STD Clinic. The STD physician has now become

Norm Rice
April 29, 1983
Page 2

involved in following the case and advocating for the patient with Harborview to get the patient appropriate hospital and social services. We do not know how many more patients there may be in this situation. Hopefully our surveillance system will help us find out.

- (d) Community Education - We are assisting the Seattle Gay Clinic develop health information on AIDS. The Seattle Division will pay for duplication of more copies of the attached blue handout. Our health educator will also start work on developing information on AIDS for the general community.

3) What is the Seattle Gay Clinic doing?

We are fortunate that there is a volunteer clinic specifically oriented to the gay community. As noted above the Health Department is working with the clinic. Activities that the gay clinic has undertaken are:

- Health information on AIDS (e.g. attached blue handout)
- Referrals to gay MDs familiar with AIDS
- Community AIDS forums (January 1982 and June 1983)
- "Chicken Soup Brigade" - support services to gay men who are homebound or hospitalized
- Volunteer staffing of the surveillance project

4) What are the area-wide needs:

- Funding to support AIDS surveillance project
- Funding to cover costs of AIDS informational material
- Funding to develop a community information telephone line
- Development of a referral system for AIDS cases
- Information and inservice training for area MDs
- Funding for counseling and social services for AIDS patients

Obviously, funding is a recurrent theme. As you will recall funding communicable disease control is a County responsibility under the protocol that governs the Health Department. I believe that the Health Department will seek additional funds from the County to do most of the above work. I am advocating within the Department for a greater effort with the limited resources we do have. I will keep you posted on activities.

If you have time to read it, I am also attaching an article by Congressman Ted Weiss on AIDS. You might find the article interesting.

I hope the above gives you the information you need. If you have questions, call me at work (up to 5:30 p.m. tonight) or at home (325-1380) after 9:00 p.m. or tomorrow.

JM:gmK

bcc: Tim Burak
Tom Byers